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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INL/PC LAURA MCKECHNIE; USMISSION UNVIE FOR  
HOWARD SOLOMON

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SUBJECT: CENTRAL DUBLIN GROUP MEETING: FEBRUARY 2006

REF: BRUSSELS 2418

1. Summary. During its February 22 meeting, the members of the Central Dublin Group (DG) reviewed regional reports from Northern Africa (submitted by Spain), Africa (France), the Caribbean (France), Central America (US), South America (Spain), as well as an interim report from the June 2005 meeting on Eastern Europe (Germany). The Group adopted the guidelines for restructuring that were first proposed in draft form in June 2005. Guidelines regarding DG membership will be changed to read 25 EU Member States, leaving the question of automatic membership of new EU accession states beyond the current 25 to future meetings. In addition, any reference to English as a working language was taken out of official documents upon the insistence of the Belgian and French delegations. Japanese Ambassador Shigeki Sumi replaced outgoing Belgian chair Raymond Vans. Two new DG members (Poland and Cyprus) became Mini-Dublin Groups Chairs, and there was some rearranging of other chairs as well. In addition, in future reports, Belize will become part of the Caribbean Mini Dublin Group, which will be covered by the United Kingdom. Action requests follow in para. six below. End summary.

#### REGIONAL REPORTS

2. The members reviewed regional reports covering: Northern Africa (submitted by Spain); Africa (France); the Caribbean (France); Central America (US); South America (Spain); and an interim report on Eastern Europe (Germany). During its presentation on Northern Africa, Spain highlighted Morocco's status as one of the top global producers of cannabis (and single-greatest source for the drug in Europe). France reported that the East and West coasts of Sub-Saharan Africa remain porous transit routes, and that there is a need for countries in the region to develop national data compilation capacities to better track the phenomenon. During its presentation on the Caribbean, France reported that drug consumption and cocaine and heroin trafficking (especially to Europe) in the region have increased. Regional cooperation on drug trafficking has also increased, but law enforcement resources are lacking (a complaint that was nearly universal in all regional reports) and further cross-border cooperation is needed. In its remarks, the United States echoed all of the same concerns in Central America, and noted that narco-violence, corruption and money laundering remain critical barriers to successful counternarcotics programs in the region. During its presentation on South America, Spain reported that coca production has increased in Bolivia and Peru and while decreasing in Colombia, and recommended increasing alternative development in the region. The U.S. also joined Spain in urging the DG to collect information on a broader range of member state drug control programs to avoid duplication in the region. USDEL and others questioned some language in the report, and sought and obtained additional time to allow capitals a chance to review and clear the report in final as soon as possible. In interim report on Eastern Europe, Germany reported well-known facts on transit routes for Afghan heroin through Central Asia and Russia.

#### REFORM OF THE DUBLIN GROUP

3. The Group adopted the guidelines for restructuring the Group that were first proposed in draft form in June 2005. Most significantly, the EU accepted the Japanese proposal regarding DG membership of EU Member States beyond the current 25. The new guidelines now read "(Dublin Group) participants include the (25) Member States of the European Union," leaving the question of automatic membership of new EU accession states to January 1, when the first new EU accession states are slated to join the EU. In addition, any reference to English as a working language was taken out of official documents upon the insistence of the Belgian and French delegations and due to EU regulations on languages for official meetings. It was underscored that non-English papers should be submitted five weeks in advance to allow for translation. Simultaneous translations into French will also be provided by the EU when meetings are in Brussels; if meeting are held in a different venue, English would remain the working language but the host country would provide

translation services of experts, as needed.

#### DUBLIN GROUP CHAIRS

14. Japanese Ambassador Shigeki Sumi became new Chair of the DG, replacing outgoing Belgian chair Raymond Yans, with unanimous support. The Group rearranged some of the Regional Mini-Dublin Group (MDG) Chair responsibilities. Two new Members - Cyprus and Poland--will subsequently chair the Near East (including Turkey and Iraq) and Eastern Europe, respectively. Germany will chair the Balkans. Norway and Portugal will divide responsibility for East and Southern Africa (Laura, is this correct interpretation?). Belize will now be included as part of the Caribbean MDG, chaired by the United Kingdom.

#### THEMATIC DEBATE

15. During the thematic debate on amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), Japan presented a report on the growing global problem with ATS while Belgium noted its domestic local law enforcement efforts to combat ecstasy production and trafficking. The European Commission suggested that the next thematic debate topic could be on African trafficking routes, and the new Japanese Chair said he would look into this idea further.

#### ACTION REQUESTS

16. The U.S. will need to present an update on its regional report on Mexico and Central America at the next Dublin Group to be held June 8 in Brussels. NOTE: New guidelines for reports were adopted at the June 2005 meeting. The U.S. reports should therefore follow this new format. Recommendations from all MDG will now be approved by the entire DG group. Therefore DG recommendations should highlight political initiatives and donor priorities.

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